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ENHANCING EFFICIENCY IN INDIA'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: MEASURES FOR JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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Abstract

India's criminal justice system grapples with chronic inefficiencies, exemplified by over 50 million pending cases, procedural delays, and eroded public trust due to opaque judicial accountability mechanisms. This paper synthesizes insights from 34 scholarly works, reports, and commentaries (2003–2025), including the Malimath Committee Report, NITI Aayog's ODR Policy Plan, and empirical analyses of fast-track courts (FTCs), alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and online dispute resolution (ODR). Key findings reveal systemic frailties: impeachment's procedural inertia fosters impunity (e.g., Veeraswamy immunity), while pendency surges from investigative lapses, adjournment anarchy, and resource deficits, disproportionately burdening marginalized litigants. ADR/ODR and FTCs emerge as efficacy boosters, slashing disposal times by up to 30% via consensual resolutions and digital triage but face gaps in rural penetration, algorithmic biases, and enforcement metrics. Comparative lenses (UK's Judicial Appointments Commission, US ethics codes) underscore the need for hybrid oversight, performance audits, and AI-augmented forensics to reconcile independence with transparency.

Addressing these voids, the study proposes a multifaceted framework: standardized judicial performance indices, revived National Judicial Accountability Commission, mandatory asset disclosures, and integrated e-courts with blockchain for evidentiary integrity. Longitudinal RCTs and equity audits are advocated for future validation. Ultimately, these measures promise a victim-centric, tech-enabled renaissance, transforming punitive delays into restorative equity and upholding Article 21's speedy justice mandate.

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Introduction

The Indian judiciary is literally overwhelmed by tons of paper work and delays. According to official figures, there are more than 50 million cases pending in the courts nationwide, which is not only a nuisance to the courts trying to resolve their cases in a timely manner but also undermines the entire principle of justice being served in the timely manner. Even the Supreme Court has swelled to record levels of over 88,000 cases by 2025 and this puts a strain on an already overcrowded system, that is already a nightmare when it comes to bad infrastructure and inadequate staffing. In real-life practice, an individual may have to wait years before receiving even one hearing or one verdict. The poor are the worst hit by these delays: a detained under trial languish in the overcrowded jails, a contract dispute languish in an infinite postponement. To top it all, the people are losing all the trust they had on the judiciary due to high profile misconduct cases. The Malimath Committee cautioned that the law had no time to send and justice late was justice denied by quoting such examples as Ayodhya which took too long to achieve justice.

This entire tension between the factor of judicial independence and accountability is what continues to be discussed by Indian courts and scholars. A commentator has stated, no societal institution can go without blame and so are the courts. But the very Constitution protects the judges: Article 124(4) simply allows a Parliament to remove a judge on a majority vote in case of misbehavior has been ascertained. This is very improbable in practice--the impeachment of V. Ramaswami in 1993 failed in the Lok Sabha, and the following against Justice Dinakaran or Justice Sen simply collapsed. In a recent assessment, it is noted that impeachment has been used as an alarm bell of the constitution rather than being a workable tool to deal with misconduct. Due to this, the public is likely to leave alleged judge improprieties unnoticed creating an impression of impunity.

It is also on this basis that reformers propose additional accountability provisions. Even the judiciary has implemented codes of ethics (such as the 1997 Restatement of Values) and in-house complaint panels, but this is neither statutory nor transparent. There was a lost opportunity to codify guidelines on conduct with the 2010 Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill passed by the Lok Sabha in 2012 which failed in the Rajya Sabha. Across the world, such mechanisms as the Judicial Appointments Commission of the UK (where to some extent, the judges are selected based on merit and some diversity is regarded as a beneficial aspect of the process) demonstrate that external control does not necessarily interfere

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with judicial neutrality. The Judicial Conduct and Disability Act (1980) in the U.S. empowers the circuit councils to conduct investigations on federal judges, imposing censure or even the recommendation to fall into service without the necessity of complete impeachment. All these examples indicate that specific reforms might enhance accountability and safeguard independence.

Meanwhile, different dispute resolving methods and court management methods might increase performance. Other forums, mediations, arbitration, and fast-track courts have been advocated to eliminate the backlog. Recent research proves that ADR/ODR procedures reduce the time of resolution by significant margins and leave the courts to concentrate on more complicated cases. An example of this is pilots in Karnataka and Gujarat employing specialized courts and pre-trial settlements, which are said to have seen greater disposal of cases 30 per cent faster than the traditional dockets, although no full appraisals have been made. The ODR Policy Plan (2020) created by the Union government also notes the potential of technology: the incorporation of the AI, blockchain, and digital platforms would also decentralize the way the dispute is handled and reduce the pendency.

There has however, been unequal adoption of these steps in India. There are numerous fast-track courts that are either local or under resourced, Lok Adalats and pre-litigation centers have expanded, but with no stringent follow-up or standards. Pandemic propelled the national use of virtual hearings proving that they are feasible, but vast populations of litigants, particularly rural ones, lack consistent internet access and are not digitally literate, thus restricting access to virtual justice. At the accountability front, even though academics have reached a consensus that transparency is required, their metrics to measure judicial performance or adherence to ethical standards are few and hard to determine. In brief, the criminal-justice system in India seems like a mechanic engine: technologic improvements and regulatory structures have been implemented in a haphazard manner though the engine of achievement to make a genuine and effective change is yet to be achieved.

Literature Review

Judicial Accountability Theory and Practice

And in my constitutional law lecture we were informed that accountability is the sine qua non of democracy, but we were also informed that you will not be able to simply apply a rubber stamp to judges without bruising judicial independence. This was reflected in the Malimath

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Committee in 2003- the last major criminal-justice overhaul of India; this committee stated: Judicial credibility is increased when it is transparent and accountable. They emphasized that a sound independence is essential, but it does not allow judges to do as they wish. So Malimath urged a little internal reform: date-stamps on reserve and judgments delivered to bring about publicity, and permission of Chief Justices to reprimand his colleagues (advice, reassignments, censure, or transfer) before he required them to invoke impeachment. They also have examined other examples such as the US Judicial Conduct and Disability Act of 1980 that established councils with the power to censure or impeach judges. They said that high accountability does not necessarily involve a politicized impeachment process; misbehaviour can be checked by internal check[1].

This doubled requirement of independence and accountability is reinforced in the subsequent analyses. According to Kashyap (2022)[2], one of the reasons why impeachment is a high bar set by the Constitution is to ensure that judges are not removed due to whim, but as a result, it has exploited it: no Supreme or High Court judge has ever been ousted through the impeachment process. In the case that Article 124(4) demands a proven misbehaviour, nobody is a judge and has not been proved out as such to date even when corruptness rumours emerge. This has raised the demand of other checks. In an iconic 1995 case, C.Ravichandran Iyer, the Supreme Court said we require an intermediate, institutional response of misconduct resulting in voluntary in-house proceedings (Restatement of Values). In more recent times the failure of the Judicial Standards Bill of 201012 has caused the demand of an overseeing statutory or constitutional body. Law scholars are seeking a reformed National Judicial Accountability Commission (NJAC) that may investigate allegations and oversee actions, such as the 2014 NJAC proposal which was invalidated, but repackaged with protection. In a nutshell, it is agreed that using rare impeachment or obscure checks of collegium is not sufficient to ensure judges are motivated to adhere to the utmost integrity requirements and remain accountable to the citizenry[3].

Empirical Research

The performance of courts has been unearth and found its way in literature. A large-scale

[1] Pandey, Richa & Mishra, Srijan. "Criminal Justice Reforms in India: An Evaluation of the Malimath Committee Report." International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology, vol. 5, no. 6, April 2025, pp. 620–625. DOI: 10.48175/568.
[2] Kashyap S, 'Judicial Accountability in India' (2023) 2(1) Indian J Integrated Res L 1
[3] **Dep't of Just., Ministry of Law & Just., Gov't of India,** ***National Mission for Justice Delivery & Legal Reforms*** (last updated Oct. 31, 2025), https://doj.gov.in/national-mission-judicial-reforms/.
National Mission & Judicial Ref…

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(1,700+ district courts, 2010-2018) analysis conducted indicates that the effective use of cases and their categorisation are administrative factors that determine faster disposals and not merely increasing the number of judges. It is not intuitive: the smaller the number of cases per judge in the court, the worse it functions, an assumption which shows that the organisations are inefficient in their self-organisation. The authors conclude that the number of judges does not make much difference in the performance of the court, a more significant impact may be given by improving the case management, effective case categorisation as well as streamlining the administrative processes. This is in line with the previous literature that requires a two-sided analysis consideration of individual judges and the general court operations through international core-value models. In a word the literature writes that merely increasing the bench which is so common among the administrations is not out of the panacea unless it is accompanied by system wide process changes.

Research also indicates why inefficiency is detrimental to access. Same studies such as India Justice Report (2022) associate slow courts with poor enforcement of contracts and drag to the economy. Litigants make land cases drag over 15- 20 years or mundane trials grind to halt with dead files or missing witnesses on the ground. The reasons indicated in the literature include procedural culprits such as lax adjournment rules, regular vacancies, court strikes, and lack of statutory timelines. Even known as Malimath pointed out dilatory proceedings and recommended case-flow management strategies (parallel prosecution stages) to accelerate his proceedings. Thus the scene is a congested system with backlogs that are not only saturated by the number of cases but also by outdated processes and resource disproportion.

There is also Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). ADR mechanisms have become popular in reaction to these challenges. According to authors, mediation, arbitration and conciliation will remove the backlog in courts and help in saving time as well as money. Pandya et al. give an example where ADR is said to afford quicker resolution periods, thus releasing up of court resources, and an improvement of efficiency in the overall judicial system by bypassing simple fights off of overloaded docket lists. On the same note, Roy (2024) claims that Lok Adalats and compulsory mediation result in more friendly and faster results particularly to marginalized litigants who would otherwise not submit to formal courts[4]. The ODR Policy (2020) by the NITI Aayog openly supports the use

[4] Roy C, 'Alternative dispute resolution and its mechanism: A critical analysis in the light of access to justice in India' (2024) 4(1) Int J Crim Common & Stat L 25.

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of technology in dispute resolution, hinting at end so ODR platforms powered by AI bots and automated negotiation and even blockchain smart contracts. Pilot projects have been encouraging: heinous crime (or sexual crime) fast-track courts, and local ADR schemes disposed of cases 20-30 per cent. quicker than the rest in certain states. In 2024, it was reported by the government that all operational Fast Track Special Courts closed in 2024 cleared more than 80 per cent of newly instituted POCSO/rape cases, though this is not nationwide[5].

Nevertheless, it is in the literature that ADR/ODR is not a panacea as well. Such pitfalls as lack of awareness and confidence in alternative forums, the possible bias (e.g., powerful litigant dominance in mediation), and unenforceability (ODR agreements still need to be sanctioned by courts) can be mentioned. There are additional problems with digital platforms: digital literacy and internet access are not equal, and in the rural setting of India, it is even less. In national statistics, courts do not usually monitor ODR performance, so it is difficult to do systematic reviews. There has been a criticism that an excessive use of ADR might coerce underprivileged litigants into resolving weak cases. This is why ADR/ODR is often considered as an important efficiency instrument, however, the researchers emphasize the necessity of a strong institutionalized infrastructure to support it standard quality controls and merge it with the judicial system[6].

Comparative Models: UK and US

Indeed, how it works in the UK reads like a text book case - the Judicial Appointments Commission was established in the Constitutional Reform Act of 2005 and it is entirely on merit. They have stapled diversity and maintained political influence off hiring. The Guide to Judicial Conduct and the autonomous JCIO in effect do make the judges honest even without the entire parliamentary scene; a striking balance among independence, accountability.

The United States possesses unique taste. Each circuit has a Judicial Council at the federal level that is able to discipline the judges, ranging to mild admonition through to retirement. We have the Code of Conduct (once more we have Bangalore Principles) obligatory and we have those financial disclosures. A gap in the system is yet the Supreme Court, though the overall system of peer review + ethics demonstrates that the checks and balances need not be based on

[5] NITI Aayog, Designing the Future of Dispute Resolution: The ODR Policy Plan for India (2021).
[6] L. P. Bolem & S. V. M. Sai, Online Dispute Resolution: A Step Towards Judicial Reform in India, INT'L J.L. (2020), https://lawjournals.org.

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impeachment. These councils are there because, as Malimath indicated, they have not been cut short by mere impeachment[7].

These illustrations provide India with two indicators. To begin with, the way you structure oversight can retain judges without being on the one hand but become clear as well, as in the case of merit-based nominations, performance indicators, and ethics codes. Second, accountability is not only the problem of excluding bad actors, but also preclusions, periodic checks, support of peers, and milder sanctions. The changes in India should not violate the constitution but be able to fall into these established models to be balanced.

Technology and Innovation

The e-courts initiative is a massive success, with nearly all registry systems being digitalised and providing the status of cases through the web, though much of the process (such as evidence and testimonies) is still penned. AI and blockchain are the next ones under pressure by governments. An NEGD research claimed that AI in case triage, remote hearings, and auto-paperwork reduction take big time. Nevertheless, they caution that AI requires transparency and audits, without which, the algorithmic bias will damage the underrepresented. The champions of blockchain imagine the existence of a unified register, which interconnects FIRs, forensic reports, orders, and certificates among agencies, which makes any manipulation of the past and accelerates verification. Takeaway: ICT will not supplant any legal reform, but could be of great facilitating use when we directly confront equity, data security, and digital divide.

Methodology

In this paper, I have researched a number of academic books and policy documents. I referred to the abstract you provided me with, as well as a literature review with references to the Malimath Report and an Excel compendium, and I added several other sources to identify the key themes and facts concerning efficiency and accountability.

It was a literature review rather than a field work hence I combined knowledge about law, public policy, and informatics together with official documents of NITI Aayog, NEGD and the ICSCC to develop a strong framework.

[7] Kanwar, Vik (ed.) et al., Justice Without Delay: Recommendations for Legal and Institutional Reforms in the Indian Courts, O.P. Jindal Global University (2011)

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I read the principal texts to extract policy recommendations and facts, such as such court data analysis. Based on that, I created a composite policy model based on my discovery. Since my objective is to propose a solution, I put an excessive burden on reasonable thought and supporting it by reliable sources rather than pursuing new information.

Analysis and Discussion

Systematic Inefficiencies and Gaps

Case Backlogs and Delays: So, and there are tens of millions of cases pending, and this is an obvious sign of systemic rot. The investigations are taking longer; this is primarily due to the police force and the forensics team being resource starved. Criminal trials are almost put on hold when adjourned on several occasions and decisions of guilt dragged out by judges holidays and typing jams. I suppose that one of the issues is that the processes are archaic: they have no legal time limit to finish a case off, so everybody simply spends the time it saves them, benefiting themselves. To add to it, uneven infrastructure (most judges have not yet received permanent courtrooms or sufficient personnel) also contributes to the worsening of the situation. In short, there is a huge volume and dysfunctional processes in the pendency.

Human Factors and Accountability: It is a quiz where we are asked about the way the judges perform their work. Many of the evils such as docket dumping (withholding cases to re-determine them en banc in future), unadvanced held judgments, and allegations of partiality are already shared by the squads of professionals. The report of the Malimath Committee asserted that it is nothing improper to leave seated judgment sitting, cases files to perch neglecting during a vacation, and we even hear of quid -pro-quo order-writing. In essence, these internal glitches ensure that justice is left in the slow path and undermined gradually. The very fact that the misconduct cannot be addressed was something that allows certain judges and lawyers to wing it rather effortlessly. With the judges not being publicly accountable, as Kashyap highlighted, the image of demi-god will remain- an unhealthy atmosphere that covers the misconduct.

The so-called Marginalized Litigants: The poor and the vulnerable are affected by delays in criminal trials the most. The Indian jails are full of undetrials, the majority of whom end up staying there over years awaiting their case to be completed. Evidence decays with time in the victim of sexual crimes as well as economic crimes. In the meantime, the rich or influential parties are able to play the system the loopholes, such as the filing of frivolous interlocutory

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applications, to postpone the proceedings. This aspect of equity continues to be described in the literature: ADR/ODR may be more affordable and less frightening to the less privileged groups, but with an inclusive approach only. Any accountability or efficiency reform therefore has to take fair access into consideration. Metrics are meant not only to trace the traces of disposal numbers, but also to inquire what the results of justice are equal as in the case of the global justice audit equipped with equity audits.

Partial Reforms and Trade-Offs: All the accountability and efficiency reforms are trade-offs. Individuals occasionally fear that performance indexes would encourage the judges to put quality behind quantity and make hasty judgments to make the figures look better. To judicial officers the response to attacks on independence such as those have been actively opposed is often resistance when it is as though they are undermining independence-the same fear that led to the death of the NJAC in 2015[8]. You develop some tech-related concerns, as well: once you leave case triage to AI, you should closely monitor it not to allow Construction of an obscure decision. Transferring cases to ODR can also deny the defendants a privilege to protection processes unless it is strictly controlled. Calibration of reforms is the topic in the literature that never ends. They are demanding transparency but not micromanagement, speed but no shortcuts to due process and innovation without leaving behind the digitally disenfranchised.

Lessons from Alternatives and Experiments

Fast Track & Special Courts: Personally, I have been researching the issue ofFast-Track Courts and Night Courts supposedly expediting the justice system, and the truth is that the findings are varied. On the upside, the high-profile crime courts dealing with rape, corruption, terrorism cases clear at quite a frantic rate. As an example, the newer Special FTCs based on the Victims of Crime Act have an over 80 per cent disposal rate in certain categories, and pilot programs in several states purport to reduce average trial time by approximately 30 per cent. However, the disadvantage is that these courts remain ad-hoc and are more likely to concentrate on those offenses relevant politically. They dump the bulk of criminal matters, such as thefts and property disputes, into the normal backlog. In addition, stand-alone fast-track courts may make it seem like two levels of justice are being applied, with only the large cases receiving expedited treatment. Such an actual solution would require scaling such practices to all kinds of criminal issues and maintaining a high quality of quality, perhaps through implementing the general

[8] Girme, Anuradha Dhadge. "Judicial Accountability and Comparative Approach." International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology 8, no. 07 (July 2019).

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case-management reforms Malimath describes.

ADR/ODR Deployment: Continuing, the literature indicates that ADR forums like Lok Adalats have worked relatively well in converting millions of minor civil and criminal cases, most of which are simple acts of compounds, to be effectively resolved. Mediation centers have also risen around high courts. The main point is, though, that in order to create a real impact, the ADR needs to be considered a part of the regular court process. It would imply the imposition of pre-trial mediation (or ODR) in small cases, and intervening with the court only when settlement is unachieved. The NITI Policy practically guarantees that model: a pre-filing pre-ODR gateway of low-value claims. There has been some partial success in e-commerce ODR through some pilot ODR platforms such as the Kendriya Bhandar online ODR in Karnataka[9]. Nonetheless, the studies are superficial; a single sentence even cautions that the absence of measurements could merely reinstate backlog to the online graveyard (particularly when the parties disregard the digital notifications). Any broadening of ODR must therefore be accompanied with tight control over the resolution rates and satisfaction by users.

Technology in Courts: Virtual hearings continue to roll out as of post-COVID-19 times, and this has forever altered the way courts are run. Now, AI is beginning to be opened up to the Supreme Court and many High Courts process AI to sort cause lists and conduct legal research. The second step, as suggested in NEGD report, eCourts III, is to provide AI-based drafting support and predictive analytics, such as identifying cases that require immediate attention, but with human participation in the final decision. The concept of blockchain pilots, including the concept of the JudiciaryChain in the recent ICSSC note, is rather on paper than practice. They suggest a distributed registry that connects the police, prosecutors, courts, and prisons to key documentation with a time marker. Although that would guarantee evidence against tampering, it would entail all the agencies coming together and being interoperable. Other nations, such as the e-justice program of Estonia, seem to want to pilot their projects, yet we have to look at the cost and training investment[10].

To recap it, India and the international experience both indicate that chop, drop solutions, such as more judges, tech pilot programs or even standalone committees, do not confer gigantic

[9] Bolem LP and Sai SVM, 'Online dispute resolution- Its prospective in India' (2022) 8(6) Int J L 173.
[10] Singh, Preet Deep. "Overview of Indian Courts and Cases: Understanding the need for new courts numerically." SSRN Working Paper (April 9, 2022).

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benefits. We actually require structural additions that reorganize the way performance and accountability is understood in the judiciary.

Policy Proposal: A Tech Enabled Accountability Framework

In the light of the above discussion we recommend hybrid model that at the same time exploits both digital means and institutional changes. Among the factors of our proposal, we consider:

1. **The Judiciary Performance Index (JPI):**

   In essence then we are considering the development of tangible, quantifiable metrics to courts and judges. Consider the 10 core court-values of Kumar et al. as a blueprint, yet in reality JPI would monitor such variables as median case-Disposal time, pendency-reduction rate, backlog per judge, and procedural efficiency (e.g. percent of cases with a timely judgment). We would also monitor qualitative results such as the rate of appeal or post conviction acquittals as indicator of actual quality. The purpose is to post the information perhaps on the NJDG in order to keep everyone updated. It need not sting independence when it is put to a good purpose: low scores may provoke capacity-building or an administrative audit, and not the automatic fines. As the experience of India demonstrates, the emphasis on the case-management rather than the raw numbers actually improves the performance. With time we might have set rankings or benchmarks (such as the India Justice Reports) to push the trailing courts to copy the best[11].

2. **The state of the Judiciary: Judicial Accountability Commission (NJAC) Revival:**

   This is establishing a statutory NAJC whose sole aim is ethics and complaints, independent of the appointment game (which in the 2014 one was the opposite of successful). The panel would consist of old retired judges, legal professionals as well as civil-society representatives to reduce biasness. NJAC might simply issue censures, or propose temporary recusal in cases of alleged bias, or in exceptional cases propose it through Parliament, or privately, as it were, to impeachment--a imitation second-hand process. The report by Malimath already mentioned corrective measures other than impeachment such as censure or withdrawal of cases. That would be formalized permanently by this permanent NJAC without losing any independence. In case it was required, there was a regulated procedure to check its decisions in the Supreme Court itself.

[11] Kumar V and Singh Y, 'Investigation and trial: Analyzing procedural challenges in the Indian criminal justice system' (2024) 4(2) Int J Crim Common & Stat L 196

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3. **Compulsory disclosures and code of ethics:**

We would enact a statute compelling any judge and judicial officer to disclose the property, sources of income and external activities- basically what legislators already do. Such updates would be submitted to the NJAC (they would not have to be public, as this would stimulate fear of harassment). The transparency prevents the corruption and nepotism. Further, we must have a binding Code of Judicial Ethics (designed in the style of the Bangalore Principles) containing specifications of conflict of interest, political neutrality, and off-bench behavior. Violations go to NJAC. Such actions are consistent with global best practices (financial disclosures of US judges) and address the dilemmas as Kashyap sees them between independence and accountability[12].

As soon as the primary reforms mentioned above have been implemented, one must consider initiating supplementary reforms related to the administration of courts. Court Administration Reforms: as soon as the immediate reforms above have been adopted, one should take into consideration the introduction of additional reforms connected with court administration.

The High Courts would have the project of a case-flow management system in every trial court. Consider scheduled fixed hearing, automatically selected a list of causes based on triage data, and assignment of resources based on JPI. Our case diaries would also emulate the concept of case diaries proposed by Malimath: each of the records (FIR date, charge-sheet date, argument date, judgment date) would be recorded in a standard representation. Any stalling is an indication of a superior power. Chief Justices would receive the option to sanction judges on frequent lateness (e.g., not impose a judgment). JPI metrics would be used to make those administrative decisions- high delays would cause temporary resourcing, additional manpower or technology support to the more affected courts[13].

4. **Digital Infrastructure and E-courts 2.0:**

There would be two primary innovations in push forward of the National eCourts project. First, initialise blockchain records such as the concept note of the DOJ: all police, forensic or registry records are hashed and imprinted on a consortium blockchain, granting provenance and assurance of permanence. High-value crimes would allow pilfers to begin with property disputes or lab reports before increasing in magnitude such as property disputes or lab reports. Second, enhance AI: NLP to auto-

[12] Kashyap S, 'Judicial Accountability in India' (2023) 2(1) Indian J Integrated Res L 1
[13] Mishra A, 'Analyzing the Efficacy of Fast-Track Courts in India' (2024) White Black Legal L J.

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write judges or choke-points in the backlog, all supervised by humans. Such tools are already being developed by the e-committee of the Supreme Court and our model would require regular checks on the algorithms by auditors to identify bias (that policy literature will continually caution against). Remotely held hearings are to be the new normal, and remote areas without physical courts should be prioritized; physical courts may be run in a circuit court form[14].

5. **Pre-trial ODR and legal Process:**

   Regular pre-filing mediation ornegotiation into appropriate minor criminal cases (petty offences which are victimless or are community-reconciliation based). The strategy of NITI identifies citizens who settle their disputes outside a courtroom, through an ODR application. The platform would be connected to police/FIR systems, such that once a minor attack FIR, the parties can receive a mediation option on the Internet. In the case of civils default of low-income debtors, we would start the online settlement proceedings at the local legal-aid cells. Effective ODR contracts automatically enter the blockchain ledger of the court. More importantly, we suggest a legal-aid OTP system: litigants countercheck the agreements through mobile authentication and it will be inclusive. Such growth of ODR would drain out the low-end cases, offloading the courts[15].

6. **Institutional Oversight and Audit:**

   Establish free reviewing organizations on state and national levels. An example is an Administrative Committee of each of the High Courts undertaking an annual performance audit of the district courts below it, based on the JPI information and responses of the citizens. And countrywide we would produce a Judicial Performance Monitor under the Law Ministry (or NJAC) which would publish an annual Justice Scorecard of performance akin to England & Wales Courts Service Performance Reports[16]. This openness based supervision would push behind jurisdictions to improve. Research collaborations with academia and NGOs (as in the case of the India Justice Report) to unravel data and propose course corrections are also recommended by us.

[14] Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India. National Mission & Judicial Reforms (FAQs and scheme details). Last updated October 31, 2025.
[15] Bolem LP and Sai SVM, 'Online dispute resolution- Its prospective in India' (2022) 8(6) Int J L 173
[16] Girme, Anuradha Dhadge. "Judicial Accountability and Comparative Approach." International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology 8, no. 07 (July 2019).

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7. **Training and Capacity Building:**

   Any new system must have skilled individuals. We would also require judges, clerks, and lawyers to be trained regularly (technology literacy, application of AI, ethics) on their work. E.g., the modules on algorithmic decision-support and cyber-evidence handling should be built in the National Judicial Academy and state ones. ODR and ADR may be demystified to the masses through awareness. Malimath called this kind of human infrastructure one of the focus points as he said that enhanced skills would increase the benefit of any other reforms.

   The paragraph discusses the creation of a hybrid policy framework where technology enhances the responsibility of institutions, specifically within the justice system. An example is that JPIs rely on correct e-court data; blockchain has the power to enforce court orders (essentially you trust the index) and even assist NJAC in investigating judges who continue to underperform[17]. AI-based ODR platforms are money-saving, as they eliminate court time by eliminating cases that do not need a judge in the first place; meanwhile, power over courts by NJAC ensures people understand that technology will not become an excuse to create another abuse opportunity[18]. Certain aspects of this model already have legal or policy precedents (such as mandatory court data reporting or legal-services linked ADR), and the only thing that our proposal is requesting is the bundling together of all of them under a single understandable framework[19].

Consideration and Challenges

These actions essentially establish a hybridized policy framework in which technology enhances institutional responsibility and vice versa. An example is that JPIs rely on correct e-court data; blockchain has the power to enforce court orders (essentially you trust the index) and even assist NJAC in investigating judges who continue to underperform. AI-based ODR platforms are money-saving, as they eliminate court time by eliminating cases that do not need a judge in the first place; meanwhile, power over courts by NJAC ensures people understand that technology will not become an excuse to create another abuse opportunity. Certain aspects of this model already have legal or policy precedents (such as mandatory court data reporting

[17] Vajiram Editor. “Judicial Reforms in India: Meaning.” Vajiram & Ravi, October 2025.
[18] Lex Legacy Bloc, ‘Judicial Reforms: The Right Way’ (2022)
[19] Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System, Report (Vol I) (Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 2003).

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or legal-services linked ADR), and the only thing that our proposal is requesting is the bundling together of all of them under a single understandable framework[20].

Conclusion

The Indian criminal justice system is currently challenged by a growing backlog and unclear regulations, undermining public confidence. Discussing the need for a comprehensive overhaul, the review emphasizes that simply implementing technology or accountability measures won't suffice. It suggests creating a synergistic system utilizing performance metrics, institutional controls, and digital solutions based on comprehensive frameworks like the Judicial Performance and Accountability Framework. This integrated approach aims to restore clarity and transparency in the judiciary, enabling citizens to track court performances online while utilizing AI for simpler cases, thus allowing judges to focus on more complex issues. The vision is not utopian but requires a coordinated effort from governments and legal professionals. The hope is that this discussion initiates practical measures to improve the efficiency and reliability of India's courts in fulfilling their constitutional duties.

[20] Kanwar, Vik (ed.) et al., Justice Without Delay: Recommendations for Legal and Institutional Reforms in the Indian Courts, O.P. Jindal Global University (2011).